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ANDY HANCOCK

## **Capturing the linguistic landscape of Edinburgh: A pedagogical tool to investigate student teachers' understandings of cultural and linguistic diversity**

### **Summary**

This chapter investigates how student teachers respond to the linguistic landscape (LL) in the city of Edinburgh. It describes how students at the beginning of their Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programme took part in a 'camera safari' to engage in thinking about the multilingual communities that schools serve. The resulting corpus of photographic data captured by the students is drawn on to illustrate the range of LL in the city whilst the students' notes are analysed to gain insights into their varied perceptions of linguistic and cultural diversity. The study reveals that the student teachers interpreted LL from a variety of understandings which can be characterised as avoidance, acceptance and awareness. Finally, a critical examination is given of the use of LL as a pedagogical tool in teacher education and its effectiveness in contributing to student teachers' awareness of multilingual settings.

### **Résumé**

Ce chapitre examine comment les enseignants en formation réagissent au paysage linguistique (LL Linguistic Landscape) dans la ville d'Édimbourg. Il décrit comment les étudiants au début de leur formation initiale (ITE Initial Teacher Education) ont pris part à un 'safari photo' pour s'engager dans une réflexion sur les communautés multilingues que leurs écoles desservent. L'ensemble des données photographiques capturées par les étudiants est utilisé pour illustrer l'éventail des LLs dans la ville et les observations des enseignants en formation sont analysées afin de mieux comprendre leurs perceptions variées de la diversité linguistique et culturelle. L'étude révèle que les futurs enseignants ont interprété les LLs à partir d'une variété de perceptions qu'on peut désigner comme l'évitement, l'acceptation et la sensibilisation. Enfin, une analyse critique est proposée de l'utilisation des LLs comme outil pédagogique dans la formation des enseignants et sur son efficacité quant à la sensibilisation au multilinguisme sociétal.

### **1. Introduction**

According to the most recent statistics available in Scotland (HMIe, 2009) the number of children and young people who spoke languages other than English at home rose by thirty percent from the previous year. Furthermore, these school children and young people spoke one hundred and thirty seven different languages. It is therefore, imperative that teacher education takes the initiative and adequately prepares trainee teachers for the rapidly changing nature of multilingual classrooms.

A number of researchers have effectively shown how the study of linguistic landscapes (LL) is a powerful indicator of diversity in contemporary urban settings around the globe including Tokyo (Backhaus, 2007), Rome (Barni, 2008), Malmö (Hult, 2009) and Madrid in this book. As Cenoz and Gorter (2006, 68) state:

The linguistic landscape contributes to the construction of the sociolinguistic context because people process the visual information that comes to them, and the language in which signs are written can certainly influence their perception of the status of the different languages and even effect their own linguistic behaviour.

It may be argued, therefore, that the construct of LL has in its favour an important educational function. That is, the tangible evidence of the multiliterate ecology of cities informs the readers of signs about the range, status and vitality of languages whilst at the same time LL has the potential to influence the readers' views of multilingual settings. Although LL is proving to be a rapidly expanding mode of inquiry few studies have focused on this key educational role.

The pioneering work of Landry and Bourhis (1997) on LL did consider the perceptions of Francophone high school students of public signs in Québec. In the same vein, Dagenais et al. (2009) document how ten and eleven year-old elementary school children studied the LL in Vancouver and Montreal and used this photographic evidence as a basis for exploring language awareness activities and teaching critical literacy. The study presented in this chapter also has education as its theme but it deviates from the aforementioned work, as the research is not positioned in a city etched by the historical presence of two principle linguistic communities. Rather it attempts to shed light on how predominantly monolingual participants respond to LL in order to give them fresh insights into multilingual school contexts. Central to this pedagogy is a commitment to empower students to critically reflect on their values and beliefs and in some cases confront the misperceptions and stereotypical understandings of monolingual school communities. In this way using LL as a pedagogical tool does not just involve gaining knowledge of writing systems other than English but the very act of investigating LL can potentially alter students' worldviews and the school environment in which they will teach.

The significance of Edinburgh as a site for exploring LL is reflected in the choice of the city for a pilot investigation into the feasibility and value of a national study,

‘Mapping the Languages of Scotland’. The ‘Mapping the Languages of Edinburgh’ research surveyed students starting their secondary education (eleven to twelve year-olds) and discovered a plurilingual population far greater than generally believed (McPake, 2002). Edinburgh, the capital city of Scotland, is located on the east coast and is the country's second largest city, after Glasgow, with a population of just under half a million. Edinburgh is a magnet for job seekers<sup>1</sup>, especially recent arrivals from Poland, as well as a leading tourist destination. The city was awarded the status of UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995 and attracts thirteen million overseas visitors every year. Every August the city hosts the Edinburgh International Festival which claims to be the biggest arts and cultural gathering in the world and the *Hogmanay* (Scots for ‘the last day of the year’) celebration sees visitors from across the globe flock to the city. All of these factors give Edinburgh a cosmopolitan vibrancy and an ideal location for investigating LL.

The chapter begins with an overview of multilingual Scotland both past and present which helps shape student teachers’ perceptions of linguistic diversity. The next section explains the rationale for the ‘linguistic landscape’ exercise conducted by a cohort of postgraduate students. This is followed by a description of the range of digital photographs captured by the students to highlight the range, characteristics and functions of the environmental print on display in Edinburgh. The students’ varied views of diversity are then analysed into three general responses to the LL task in terms of avoidance, acceptance and awareness. The concluding section critically reflects on the exploration of LL as a pedagogical tool as well as its effectiveness as a means of contributing to student teachers’ understandings of multilingual settings.

## 2.1 Multilingual Scotland

Scotland has a rich multiliterate history and the earliest indication of visible written language survives in a small number of inscriptions in a script known as Pictish (Joseph, 2004). Additionally, evidence of the runic alphabet from the third century, also carved in stone, have been discovered in the far north islands of Orkney and Shetland and illuminate the Scandinavian background of the islands’ language and cultural history.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2004-05 the City of Edinburgh absorbed more than a quarter of all migrants coming to Scotland (Orchard et al, 2007).

Gaelic is one of Scotland's oldest languages. It arrived in the west of Scotland as a result of incursions of Irish settlers in the fifth and sixth centuries and for short period in the eleventh century became the language of the Crown and of Government. However, it was not until the seventeenth century that Scottish Gaelic distanced itself linguistically from Irish Gaelic by establishing a spelling system different from the Irish one. An illustration of the multilingual nature of Scotland is in the late medieval period where in the Highlands and Western Isles the use of vernacular Gaelic, classical Gaelic, Scots and Latin were in evidence.

Scots, a Germanic language in origin, made inroads into southern Scotland from northern England in the seventh century. Scots has a rich literary past and it came close to becoming the 'national' language in the early sixteenth century when it was the language of education and commerce as it gradually replaced Latin as the language of official documentation. Despite being a language often heard in the home Scots suffers from its linguistic closeness to English and without a standardised spelling system it is often viewed by educationalists as a fragmented range of dialects (Judge, 2008). However there have been a number of school based initiatives by committed teachers to raise the status of the language and research has demonstrated that children, in particular boys, show a marked improvement in both literacy and confidence following the introduction of Scots lessons (Lucas, 2009).

The linguistic makeup of Scotland has traditionally been characterised by large settled communities of citizens originally from commonwealth countries such as Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Hong Kong. Given the tendency for these communities to establish small businesses either as shopkeepers or in the food catering industry their presence is frequently visible on shop fronts in the High streets across the country. The expansion of the European Union in 2004 brought a substantial, and largely unexpected, arrival of migrant workers to Scotland, especially from Poland, who contribute to the country's economy (Orchard et al., 2007) and these new migrants are beginning to make their mark on the cityscape.

A further diversification of languages spoken by children attending Scottish schools is due to changes in immigration and asylum policies which provided the legal basis for large numbers of asylum seeking families to be dispersed to Scotland (Candappa et al., 2007). Most of these asylum seeker families originate from a range of countries

experiencing war, conflict and persecution such as Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq. The nature of these new patterns of migration to Scotland over the last decade are characterised by the notion of ‘super-diversity’ (Vertovec, 2007). Such a condition is distinguished by a dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new and scattered, multiple-origin, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified migrants.

Gaelic has benefitted more than Scots from measures outlined by the European Union to target Regional Languages for promotion and action (Extra and Barni, 2008). In 2001, the Scottish Government announced plans to erect bilingual signage along many of the trunk roads in the Scottish Highlands and The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 gives public bodies the responsibility to promote the language and consequently bilingual signs have been increasingly more visible in all parts of the country including non-traditional Gaelic speaking areas such as Edinburgh. However, emotionally charged public arguments and graffiti action raise fundamental questions about the regulations governing the languages to be used on this ‘top-down’ signage. Controversies include the toponymy and spelling conventions of place names and the visual impact of differentiated colours, sizes and order of two linguistic codes all of which can signify to the reader the dominance of one language over the other (Hicks, 2002). This is not dissimilar to debates in locations across the globe where the legality and status of languages is contested such as the Sámi area of Norway (Puzey, 2007).

Bòrd na Gàidhlig, with support from the Scottish Government, has contributed to the revitalization of the Gaelic language and this is no more apparent than in education which has experienced a steady expansion in the number of children, over the last thirty years being instructed in Gaelic in schools. Unfortunately, the research which expounds the intellectual benefits of this type of bilingual programme (O’Hanlon et al., 2010) is frequently ignored within political and public discourses and there are currently no plans to extend this type of provision to other minority languages in Scotland.

With the exception of Urdu and Chinese (taught as modern foreign languages in some secondary schools) there are presently very few opportunities available within mainstream schools in Scotland for speakers of minority languages to develop their first language skills. This policy context and coercive relations of power, means

Scotland is not currently in a favourable position to capitalise on its linguistic resources (McPake, 2006). In fact, the status of community languages is frequently at the discretion of shifting political and economic ideologies rather than a concern for social justice. For example, China's re-emerging position of strength within global trading systems has seen increased funding to support the expansion of teaching of Chinese in Scotland. This is not unlike the promotion of Japanese in schools in the 1990s to support Scotland's commercial activity with Japan.

Spolsky (2009a) has pointed to the symbiotic relationship between LL, state language policy and the use of languages in education. Since the onset of devolution in 1999 the question of a national language policy has gained political attention on a number of occasions but it was not until 2007 that a draft document 'A Strategy for Scotland's Languages' was circulated for public comment. Regrettably, the Strategy contains the following pejorative statement 'We do not bear the same responsibility for the development of other world languages which are used by communities with their roots now in Scotland'. This is a far cry from the comprehensive and coherent language policy for Scotland advocated by Lo Bianco (2008) which aims to be inclusive and shaped by guiding principles that support the maintenance and development of languages other than English. Since 2009 there has been a shift in political power to the Scottish Nationalist Party but at the time of writing, there are still no plans to resurrect the Strategy and revisit the policy neglect given to community languages.

This brief sketch of multilingual Scotland and the place of languages in education highlights two conflicting actions at work. On the one hand, at a state level, language policy and provision has taken place in an *ad hoc* fashion and dominant discourses reflect mainly the interests of English monolingualism. Whilst on the other hand, at a local level, the impact of globalization and current migration flows has had an effect on the visibility of the multiliterate ecology of cityscapes such as Edinburgh. How students in teacher-education coalesce and make sense of these two contradictory forces is the subject of the final part of this chapter. In the meantime the next section describes a pedagogical approach that attempts to raise students awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity through the exploration of LL.

## 2.2 Linguistic landscape as a pedagogical tool

As students embark on their ITE programme at the University of Edinburgh their view of the world is influenced by a 'language habitus'. That is a system of dispositions, and subliminal ways of thinking and behaving, that human agents internalise over time as a result of their submersion in particular socio-cultural environments and sets of social relationships (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). This means student teachers may articulate monolingual discourses as they prepare for their classroom practice rather than testing the validity of these fashionable hegemonic ideologies (Hancock, 2011). Yet this denial of societal multilingualism ignores the very real situations created by global migration patterns reflected in the linguistic landscapes on display in contemporary urban settings. It has therefore become paramount that ITE intervenes and finds space to inform prospective teachers about the existence of language diversity as part of a wider social justice agenda for educational institutions (Cajkler and Hall, 2008).

In fact preparation for teaching in Scotland requires the students to work towards a nationally agreed set of standards during their programme of study which specifies a range of professional knowledge, understanding and values necessary for qualification. Within these standards it states that student teachers will: 'demonstrate an understanding of principles of equality of opportunity and social justice and of the need for anti-discriminatory practices' and 'demonstrate the ability to respond appropriately to gender, social, cultural, religious and linguistic differences among pupils'.

However, in reality an overcrowded ITE curriculum means issues of diversity frequently remain at the fringes of teaching and learning (Arshad, 2009). Furthermore, the role played by ITE is even more crucial as the trainee teachers enrolled on ITE programmes at Scottish Universities (in common with the majority of practicing teachers) are most often white, middle class, monolingual and (in primary schools) female<sup>2</sup>. This demographic continues to remain unrepresentative of the communities that schools serve.

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<sup>2</sup> Ninety-two per cent of teachers in Primary schools are female and only one point one per cent of teachers are from non-white minority ethnic groups.



In order to expose pre-service teachers to the realities of the multilingual school contexts in which they will be working it was decided that at the very beginning of the programme students should take part in an open-ended ‘community day’ task. The students were organized into groups and randomly allocated a different school neighbourhood of Edinburgh to investigate a series of themes including linguistic and cultural diversity. The role of a university tutor was to provide only initial guidance. That is the students were instructed to take digital photographs of the use of languages other than English in its written form on display in public spaces and that this evidence may include public and private signs, shop fronts, notices and advertising. Some illustrations of LL including monolingual, bilingual or multilingual signs were shown to the students as a stimulus.

The employment of LL as a pedagogical tool overhauls the traditional instructional lecture-type model where theoretical understandings and content knowledge are communicated in an abstract and idealized form to compliant students. In its place the ‘camera safari’ arouses students’ curiosity and presents a challenging task by actively getting students to grapple with learning about real world situations.

The chaotic nature of LL means ‘understandings’ and appreciations of LL are clearly not necessarily unanimous and very different meanings may be attributed to signs (Ben-Rafael et al., 2010). In this way opportunities are provided for students to be involved in new ways of thinking and questioning. Subsequently, they have to take responsibility for their own collective decisions about the type of photographic data to collect and engage in discussions about what the signs mean. This fits neatly with the philosophy of co-constructivist learning inspired by the seminal work of Vygotsky (1962). Namely, through collaborative enquiry our understandings of the world are shared with others and consequently new understandings are generated.

The photographs of LL taken by the students were used to inform a group presentation as part of a Problem-based Learning (PBL) task (Bond and Feetti, 1997) centred around designing a nursery school and responding to the diverse needs of the community it serves. The students’ notes accompanying the presentation were scrutinized and this analysis is reported in the following section.

### 2.3 Students’ photographs and categories of LL

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In this study the concept of LL is employed as an awareness raising technique in order to prepare student teachers for the reality of multilingual schools. The intention here is not to quantify the corpus of photographs recorded by the students during the ‘camera safari’. Several researchers within the field have provided systematic and comprehensive classifications of visual semiotics in multi-dimensional spaces such as Scollon and Scollon (2003) and Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) but authors like Spolsky (2009b) have stressed the arbitrary nature of LL and identified the methodological challenges and unreliability of such counts. The reluctance to use statistics in this study is not just because the students operated with full autonomy of action but also because they were asked to document a social world that is capricious in nature. Furthermore, each group was sent to a different school environment that moulds them so that they act and react in different ways. That is the notion that nothing is predetermined but individuals and groups make their own conscious and spontaneous decisions about what photographs to take and why. Given the unpredictable manner of the exercise the focus is subsequently on the range, characteristics and functions of the written signs photographed by the participants in order to highlight the presence of settled minority communities and the use of their languages on display in the public sphere.

Using Ben-Rafael et al.’s (2006) categories of LL items there are some ‘top-down’ influences at work including public information and religious institutions. A photograph of a Community Health Centre sign was translated in four different languages (Urdu, Arabic, Chinese and Punjabi), in order to direct visitors to a number of departments such as Psychiatry and Chiropody. This is an illustration of what Reh (2004) refers to as ‘duplicating’ where the languages contain complete mutual translations of each other. Other photographs of this type include two notices in shop windows for a TELEPHONE HELPLINE<sup>3</sup> and SAHELIYA<sup>4</sup>. Both of these multilingual vertical arrangements cover six languages and are intended to communicate important information across a spread of minority groups. But as can be deduced (from the footnote) what the ‘authors’ consider to be their target minority groups in Edinburgh differ to some extent.

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<sup>3</sup> Translated into Kurdish, Farsi, Turkish, Arabic, Swahili and Urdu,

<sup>4</sup> An ethnic minority women’s support group. Scripts are Hindi, Punjabi, Chinese, Bengali, Arabic and Urdu.

A number of photographs were also taken of a range of scripts associated with sites of worship. These include Punjabi at the Sikh Temple or Gurdwara; a Ukrainian notice in front of the Ukrainian Catholic Church; a plaque in Arabic outside the Central Mosque and Islamic Centre and a Roman Catholic Church with a 'Welcome' poster containing over fifty different scripts which aims to convey a message of inclusivity. For more detailed insights into visual data in and around faith settings see Ruby and Choudhury (2010).

The vast majority of signs in the sample taken by the students are nonofficial signs. This demonstrates that the LL of Edinburgh is determined more by the inhabitants than the authorities. These are signs produced by individual social actors for commercial purposes 'who enjoy autonomy of action within legal limits' (Ben Rafael et al., 2006, 10). As English is the historical and main official language of the country it was therefore not surprising that the students did not find any evidence of some 'top-down' categories identified by (Scollon and Scollon, 2003, 181) such regulatory discourses (parking) and infrastructural discourses (street names) in languages other than English.

Given the recent new patterns of migration it is not unexpected that the students discovered evidence of written Polish distributed across the city. These noticeable LL items cover a vast array of commercial outlets such as supermarkets, cafés and delicatessens (POLSKIE DELIKATESY) advertising food with a Polish flavour (POLSKIE SMAK) such as SCHABOWY (schnitzel), BIGOS (cabbage stew) and GOTABKI (stuffed cabbage leaves). Also amongst the photographs was a plurality of enterprises with privately designed signs offering a variety of services such as mobile phones, hairdressing, financial services, legal and professional services and travel agencies. One salient sign clearly stated POLAK WSZKOCJI (Polish person in Scotland). All these prominent visual messages are clearly directed at the expanding Polish speaking community in Edinburgh who also stand to gain economically from selling their goods and services. However, the languages of the other countries who joined the European Union in 2004, whose migrant workers live in Edinburgh (such as Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania), were noticeably absent from the sample of photographs.

Chinese is another language clearly in existence in many streets of the capital especially visible on Restaurant and Takeaway signage. The distinctiveness of the

Chinese orthography serves a dual function here. First, a socio-cultural function as a strong symbolic marker of Chinese identity and secondly, as an advertising function with the objective of attracting customers who will probably not be able to decode Chinese but who may appreciate the aesthetics of Chinese calligraphy and its interwoven relationship with Chinese culture and cuisine. What may be also less evident to the clients is the Chinese cultural tradition of naming their businesses using lexical items that signify ‘good luck’ in order to bring prosperity to the owners and guarantee commercial success. For example, the restaurant (Figure 1) called Hall of Treasures [珍宝堂].

However, categorizing the LL as just ‘Chinese’ is over simplistic and does not reflect diversity within diversity as represented in the photographs taken by the students in terms of character types, visual layout and script mixing. What is often neglected is that there are two types of characters: traditional characters still in use in Hong Kong and markers of the Cantonese and Hakka speaking community and simplified characters used in Mainland China which signify Putonghua speakers in Edinburgh. The visual data also highlights the differences in directionality within Chinese orthography and the possibility of writing text from left to right or right to left in the horizontal lines text mode or in vertical columns. Drawing on illustrations from Hong Kong, Scollon and Scollon (2003) discuss the challenge of this indexability within geosemiotics and knowing how to read a sign in Chinese. Transliterations such as HING SING SUPERMARKET and XIANGBALA HOTPOT frequently accompany the Chinese script in signs (albeit these may not always be a direct translation). The motivation here is to support an audience of readers of English, as unlike *pinyin* used in Mainland China and Singapore, there is no official standardized phonetic script that exists in Hong Kong. For more in depth discussion about the various facets of Chinese signage refer to Curtin (2009).

Although the students were directed to LL items using written language other than English there were a number of instances where photographs were taken of signage in English as the message suggested cultural diversity to the photographer such as a sign on the door of a Driving School stating POLISH AND ASIAN DRIVERS AVAILABLE. Other illustrations within this genre include ORIGINAL INDIAN BEAUTY THERAPY, MAKKAH STORE: SUPPLIERS OF FRESH HALAL MEAT, ASLAM JEWELLERS and the bicultural identities of the accountants and tax

consultants ‘Ahmad and Nabi McMullan’. A poster advertising a multi-cultural football tournament, as part of the Scottish anti-racist campaign, ‘Show Racism the Red Card’, is also included in this classification of LL.

Although the presence of English, as the principle means of communication and the language of power, remains predominant on the LL of Scotland, the photographic data presented in this section is just a taste of the photographs collected by the students. It indicates a remarkable assortment of scripts and a vast array of LL categories and functions which defines Edinburgh’s multilingual cityscape. The process of the ‘camera safari’ brings to the fore the various ways in which students receive and act upon the LL they observe on display in the school neighbourhood. These individual and group perspectives are influenced by students’ past experiences and socio-cultural framework, as well as their understanding of the purpose of the task. The student responses will be the focus of the next section.

## 2.4 Student teachers’ response to LL

A number of authors have considered how social actors react to diversity in educational contexts (Steel, 1998, Nieto, 2010) producing categories such as silence, denial, resistance, tolerance, acceptance, solidarity and affirmation. There are of course inherent dangers in the quest to put labels on social reality, as according to Nieto (2010, 248) ‘we run the risk that it will be viewed as static and arbitrary, rather than as messy, complex, and contradictory, which we know it to be’. In addition, the literature does not always address how educators can progress from one stage to another. That said, such a theoretical model can be useful because it helps make concrete situations more comprehensible. This section of the chapter draws on the aforementioned literature and for the sake of clarity and conciseness it analyses the students’ discourses into three levels of response to the LL task: avoidance, acceptance and awareness. Each of these terms is elaborated on below.

The first level of response ‘avoidance’ is defined as a kind of blindness to linguistic and cultural diversity even though there was evidence to the contrary. An illustration of this type of situation is one group who took a photograph of a café with chairs on the pavement and had this to say:

This photo demonstrates the multi-cultural aspect of the community, specifically the ‘cafe-culture’ that mirrors a European style. This may mean many children grow up with this kind of experience.

But what the students failed to acknowledge was the name of the shop ‘Konditorei & Feinbäckerei’ (Figure 2) which specializes in German pastries and cakes and the German sign on the window ‘Qualität aus Meisterhand’.

Similarly, another group restricted their observation to a sign on a public house which said ‘Children Welcome’ and noted:

Although we never noticed a diverse, multi-cultural community we did see many of the local restaurants welcoming children. This promotes a sense of family values and encourages adults and children to go out and engage in quality dialogue together.

Of interest the submission from this group also included a photograph of a notice board inside a supermarket which contained information about staff including Omar, Pricilla and Reddy and whose photographs was clearly indicative of the diverse nature of the workforce. This was despite the fact that they claimed not to have noticed a ‘diverse community’.

Another group also failed to understand the nature of the exercise and the concept of LL as reflected in the following comment:

We think it is German but not sure if this is what we should be looking for.

With further questioning it was discovered that the group failed to correctly recognize the Polish sign FRYZJER (Hairdresser) (Figure 3). Not only was this group unsure of what counted as LL but they were also unprepared and unwilling to research further in order to increase their knowledge of writing systems other than English.

The examples cited above cover a number of complex issues of misinformation or resistance around aspects of linguistic diversity. It may be argued that when investigating the LL phenomenon some students’ inherited prejudices and distortions prevents them from seeing what needs to be seen (Glendinning, 2008) as they cannot stand outside their culturally produced and socially constructed lived experiences. The challenge here for ITE is how to engage with these students in re-looking at the world and reflective thinking.

The second type of response to emerge from the LL exercise was ‘acceptance.’ This is defined as a situation in which diversity is acknowledged and respected. For a number of students the linguistic diversity discovered in the community was conceptualised as an ‘opportunity’ with the potential to allow educators to explore citizenship education issues as these responses suggest:

Multi-cultural Scotland is truly a reality. From the affluence of migrant doctors to the tradesmen of Eastern Europe. All these new 'Scots' form vital cogs in our modern society and should offer us as educators new opportunities to explore our global community.

Diversity is opportunity! It is a theme, which can be explored and embraced as a tool in developing a child's citizenship, compassion and social skills.

From the LL task a number of students emphasized incorporating the children's linguistic capital into the curriculum in order to support the children's learning and strengthen their self-concept and identities. Typical contributions on this theme were as follows:

We provide our children with a dual language library in which they are able to sign out books to bring home and read with their families. This endeavour also serves to include the children's parents in their learning process.

Our nursery ensures that it caters to a wide variety of children by offering multiple writing systems as tools to learn and present knowledge.

Our school is aware of different languages in the community which in turn values personal experiences and affirms the children's sense of self and the value of their culture.

Moreover, an argument advanced by a few of the students was that by building on the linguistic and cultural diversity children bring to school it can be exploited as a learning resource for the benefit for both monolingual and bilingual children. Some of the responses in this vein include:

The children we meet bring with them a variety of linguistic resources and it is our job as teachers to unpack and distribute these among their peers for the benefit of the individual, community and society.

Local communities are an important resource for learning in schools and offer a context within which authentic language and cultural issues can be explored by other children.

Whilst these sentiments are to be commended there were a number of comments made by students that hinted that children's diversity was perceived as romantic or exotic. For instance, as the following views reveal:

On special days the children will enjoy food from around the world, they will learn words in the different languages, and they will be exposed to different songs and stories from around the world.

In our nursery we celebrate cultural celebrations such as Easter, Christmas and Saint Patrick's day.

Despite good intentions there is a need to move beyond an ideology where tokenistic gestures towards multiculturalism (such as celebrating festivals or ‘ethnic’ food tasting) only reinforce difference and racist attitudes by producing ‘cultural strangers’ rather than developing strategies to counter the structural and attitudinal barriers inherent within institutions and in broader society (Gorski, 2008).

The final category of analysis is ‘awareness’ defined as evidence of students engaging in a process of reflexivity as a consequence of the LL exercise. This involves a critical ‘self-awareness’ of their values and belief structures as the following quotes suggest:

We were required to see things from a different perspective, ignoring any preconceived ideas we may have had as a result of our own upbringing so our skills of empathy have developed too.

This made us think far deeper than we would have done otherwise about our surroundings in the context of the school and its value and place in the community. This was an eye opening experience that really made us think of what the community means to each of us as individuals and as a whole team.

It is interesting to look in a different way at a place I thought I knew well

Lastly, there were several examples of incidental learning as a consequence of the LL exercise. An interesting illustration of this occurred when a group of students were taking a photograph of a board with Arabic script at the side of a café. It led to a social exchange as described by one student:

When we took the photo an African man asked us if we were learning Arabic. He told us what it said.

This type of unplanned social interaction can result in changed attitudes and begins to raise awareness of issues surrounding the complex nature of authorship of LL (Malinowski, 2009).

Two students in particular became enthused by the LL exercise and took the initiative to engage further with the project. One took additional photographs of LL around her home neighbourhood on a mobile phone whilst another took photographs of a range multilingual signs in her daughter’s nursery. Interestingly, both these students had prior knowledge of diversity, one having worked in Turkey as an ESOL teacher the other living in a multilingual area of London. This brings into the open a potential methodological limitation of the study as changing perspectives maybe difficult to gauge, as a result of the LL task, as some students may already be open-minded, tuned in and sensitive to linguistic and cultural issues.

## **Conclusions**

This study has shown that by drawing student’s attention to LL in the city of Edinburgh it can heighten their awareness of linguistic diversity in the communities



that schools serve. Furthermore, the design of the ‘camera safari’ task opens up a pedagogical technique where knowledge about diversity is not presented as fixed but the unpredictable nature of LL invites unique personal and multiple responses.

An evaluation of the project highlights several potential avenues for improving the effectiveness of this pedagogical pathway. That is, there is a need to move beyond just mapping diversity and introduce mechanisms to support the reading and examination of signs at all stages of the process. For many of the students their pre-understandings of the world and situatedness in a predominantly monolingual education system means they may not be linguistically informed enough to make sense of the subtleties of LL nor to engage in the exercise on an ideological level. One solution is to prepare students in advance by supplying them with a route map to follow which signposts examples of LL to be photographed alongside questions for discussion before being cast adrift into their own school catchment areas. Another solution is to provide opportunities for students to engage in closer critical interrogation of signs to gain further understandings of the power relationships between languages and literacies within society. Activities outlined by Dagenais et al. (2009) can be drawn on such as getting students to categorise photographs and then describe the categories. According to Dagenais et al. (2009, 265) this type of discussion shifts participants ‘attention from a horizontal axis for interpreting language (taking pictures of the material world of signage) to a vertical one (considering the symbolic meaning communicated in these signs)’.

It is the responsibility of ITE to prepare new teachers for a future which will feature ever-increasing globalization and inter cultural encounters. Though still in its tentative stages, this study is one of several new initiatives currently embedded within the ITE programme to address diversity issues (Hancock, 2011). If, as the findings above suggest, that students’ understandings of cultural and linguistic diversity can alter as a result of employing LL as a learning task, then further research is required to investigate if students’ shifting perspectives have an impact on their future behaviour and progressive pedagogical practice in schools in terms of a supportive classroom environment, working with and valuing difference and connectedness to the children’s lives outside school (Lingard and Mills, 2007, 239).

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